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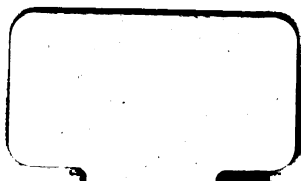
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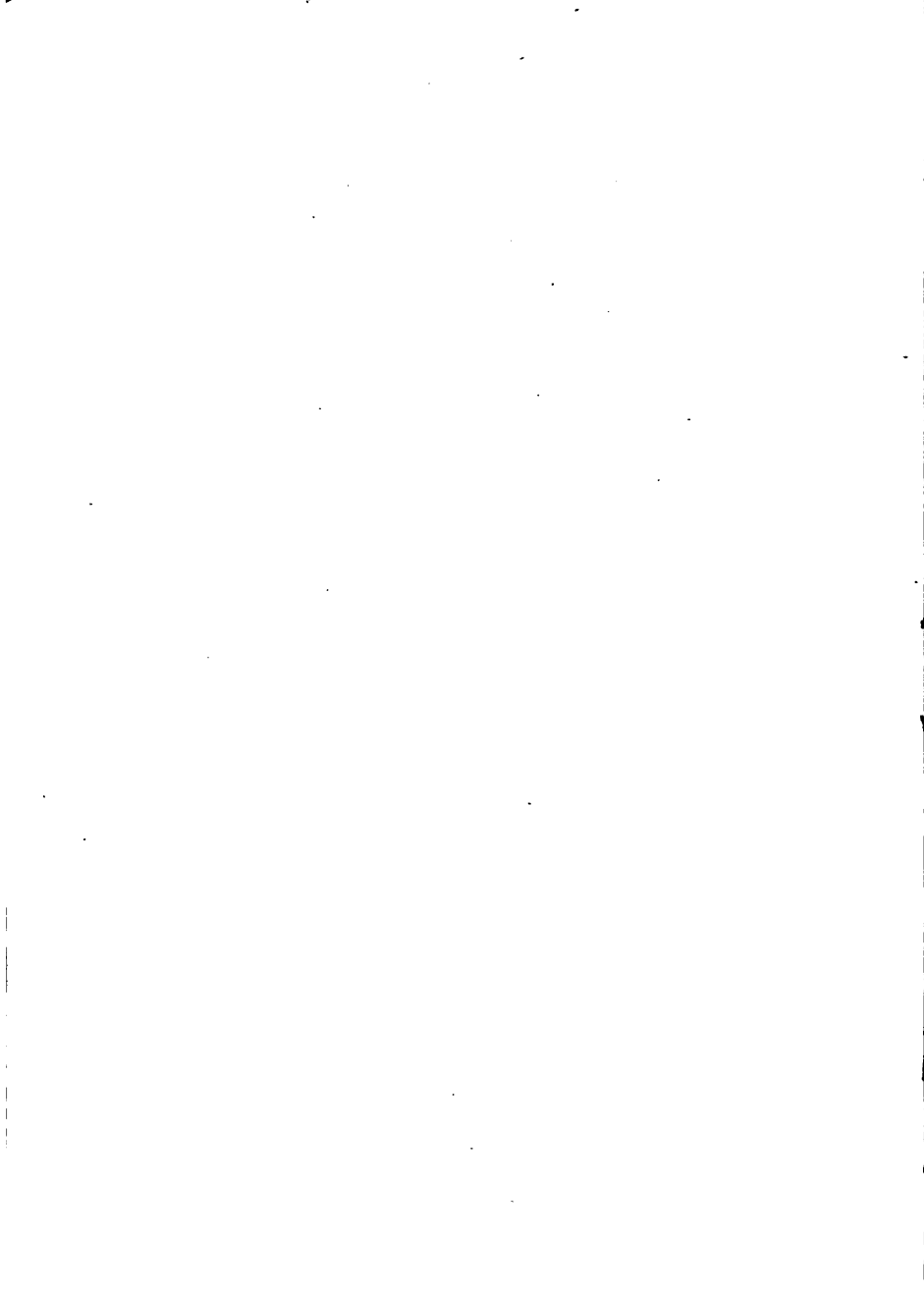


A BOY LIEUTENANT

F. S. BOWLEY



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A BOY LIEUTENANT





"Your orders are to report at once.

A Boy Lieutenant

BY

F. S. BOWLEY

With Illustrations by

M. H. LIPMAN



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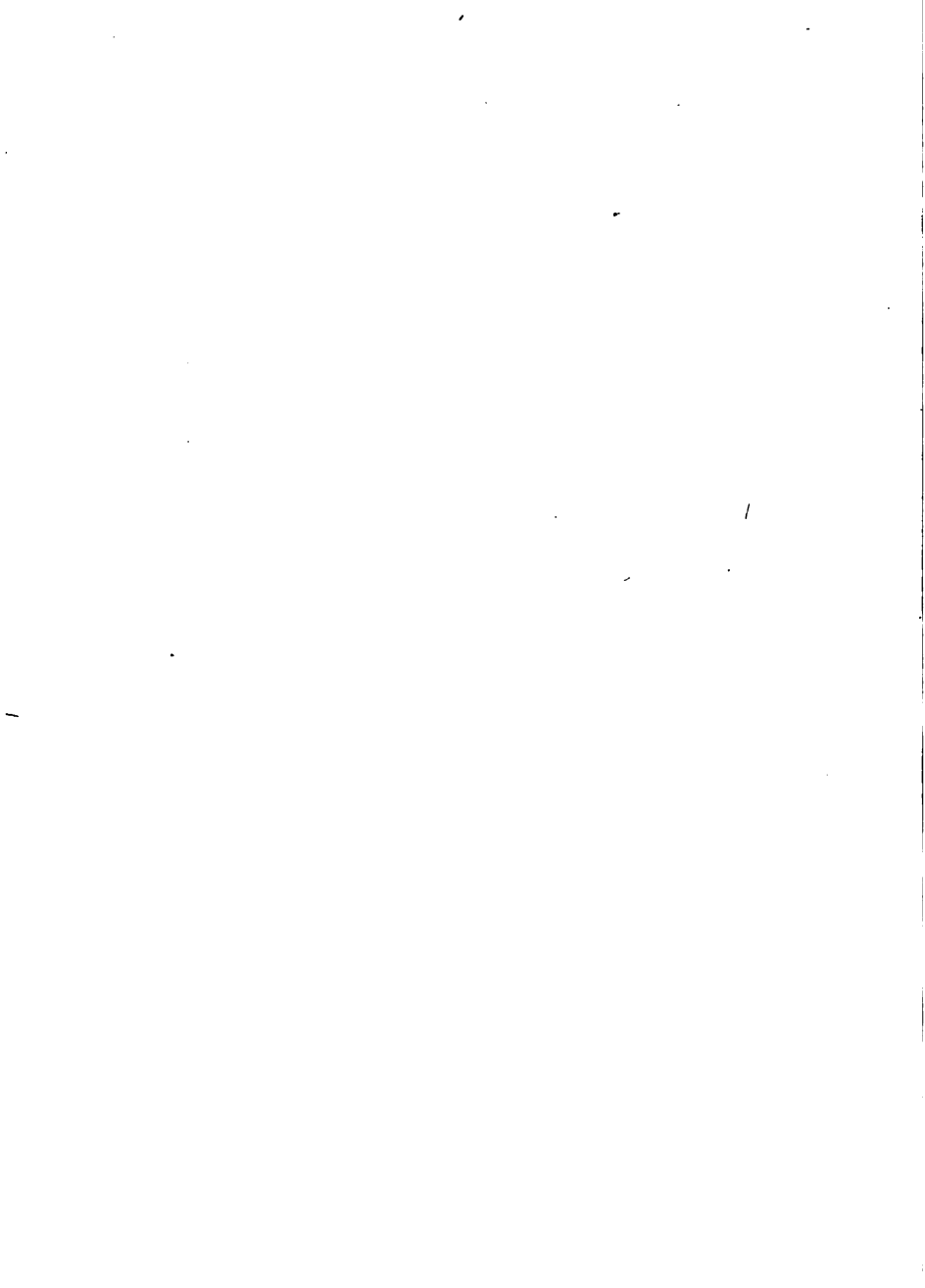
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A BOY LIEUTENANT



A Boy Lieutenant

CHAPTER I

GETTING A COMMISSION

DURING the month of February, 1864, two veteran regiments of Massachusetts volunteers, who had re-enlisted for another three years, came home on their veteran furlough of thirty days. The citizens of Worcester gave them a reception, and as a cadet in the Highland Military Academy, I was one of the veterans' escort. With the rest I marched into the hall where the formal proceedings were held, and there I saw a sight which thrilled me through and through.

One of the regiments which was being received was the Twenty-first, whose former color-sergeant, Thomas Plunket, had lost both his arms and won an immortal name at the battle of Fredericksburg.

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Plunket was present at the reception, and the mayor of the city led him upon the stage, grasping, in such fashion as he could with his helpless stumps, the very flag which he had deeply stained upon the battle-field with his own blood.

The veterans cheered wildly, and I was so much excited that I resolved on the spot to go to the war.

How I carried out my intention I shall tell you in these pages, and what I am about to narrate is, throughout, the plain and true story of my own experiences.

Not long before this incident my father had returned to Worcester from the army, his health broken down by the Gettysburg campaign. I was an only child, and I knew that my parents had made a great sacrifice to keep me at the academy. I knew, too, that if my father's health did not improve, I must soon leave school and go to work.

If I enlisted as a private, the four hundred

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dollars' bounty which volunteers then received would not go far in those high-priced times.

I was almost eighteen years old, and had been quite thoroughly trained in tactics at the academy. I had noted the manœuvres of the veteran regiments, and had perceived several inaccuracies in the officers' handling of the men. I was confident that if I could only get a commission I could do as well as they did.

But how could I get it? I knew no one who had influence at the State House in Boston, and the new regiments forming were all fully officered.

As I pondered over the matter, still under the influence of my enthusiasm, I came upon something which gave me a clue to success. Congress had passed a bill providing for the enlistment of colored men, to be organized into regiments, and to be known as United States Colored Troops.

These regiments were to be officered by white men, the majority of whom were to be

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deserving soldiers, recommended for promotion. Candidates for commissions in this corps were to be examined by a board of army officers sitting at Washington.

Convinced that here was my opportunity, I wrote to the Secretary of War, asking permission to appear for examination for the position of second lieutenant in one of the new colored regiments.

I gave my age as eighteen, and my conscience smote me a little as I wrote this, for I still lacked two months of that age. There came to me, almost as soon as a reply could be received, a large official envelope, which I opened with a beating heart. It was signed by Secretary Stanton, and contained the permission for which I had asked.

Full of delight and confidence, I showed the letter to my father. He flatly declared that I should not go. He had lost his health, he said, in the service of his country, and one was enough from a family so small as ours.

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He objected, too, to my entering a black regiment, for he feared that if I fell into the hands of the Confederates nothing more would ever be heard of me. Moreover, he did not believe that I could pass for a second lieutenant.

Mere persuasion failed to move him; but at last I told him the story of Plunket and the flag at Mechanics' Hall, and of the intense desire with which it had filled me to serve my country.

My father listened with flushed face and shining eyes. At last he said, "Well, if I were well again, I should go back with those boys. I can't bear to let you go; but if you are bound to do so, and want to try for a commission, I will help you."

Next morning I started for Washington. On the train were two fellow-cadets, who were going to visit their father, a member of Congress. This gentleman met us at Washington, and took us to see many things which inter-

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ested me greatly. We went to the White House, where the card of my host obtained for us admission to President Lincoln's room.

I shall never forget the smallest occurrence of that visit. The President was busily writing at his desk, and did not even look up when we entered. Seated on one side of the room were a lady and a gentleman. After a few moments the President laid down his pen, and turned to the lady.

"Well, madam, what is it?" he said.

She stepped to the desk, and said something in a low tone.

"Apply to General Augur, commanding the district, madam," the President answered.

"But he refused to give me the pass to Richmond!" said the lady.

"Then I can't help you," said Mr. Lincoln. "I am sorry, but I never interfere with the generals. That is all? Good-day."

At a movement of his hand, a colored servant opened the door and bowed the lady out.

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"Now, Mr. ———, what can I do for you?" said the President, addressing the gentleman, who was seated with his back to us. As the man rose, our host told us that he was a member of Congress. He turned, and we saw that his face was cut and battered, as if in a street fight.

"Why, what has happened to you?" inquired President Lincoln, kindly.

"Mr. President," began the Congressman,—his voice pitched high, as if he were addressing the House of Representatives,—"I am here to ask of you the release of a young man whose family are personal friends of mine. This young man left his home in Baltimore, and entered the Confederate army. Your troops have captured him; he is now at Point Lookout, a prisoner. This morning, going down to the wharf at Baltimore to see some friends off, I missed my footing and fell into the dock. My face was badly cut by the ice, as you see. I narrowly escaped with my life; but, Mr. Presi-

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dent, such was my anxiety for this young man that, with my face bleeding, I have come to you for an order for his release."

The man held out his hand as if he expected the order for the release would be at once forthcoming.

"Nothing easier," said the President. "Just have your young friend take the oath of allegiance, and he will be released. It does not require any order from me."

"But, Mr. President, his family do not wish to have him take that oath."

"Then he will have to stay there like any other prisoner until he is exchanged," said Mr. Lincoln. "If he takes the oath he will be released at once, and we won't bother him as long as he behaves himself; if he takes the oath and goes into the Confederate lines, and we catch him again, he will certainly be shot."

"But, Mr. President, I demand! I insist—" said the Congressman, now greatly excited.

"Now don't get agitated and forget yourself,

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sir," said the President, severely, "for if you do, I shall call the guard and have you put out."



The servant opened the door and bowed politely. The Congressman retired, crestfallen.

At last we were introduced to the President.

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He shook hands with us, and spoke a few kindly words to each. I have no more treasured recollection than the memory of the strong, manly clasp of that big hand, and the kindly expression of the honest, rugged face.

The next morning I reported for my examination. Several applicants were there, and the clerk informed me that probably it would be two or three days before I should be examined.

Most of those waiting were soldiers, and nearly all were young men. As soon as they were called to the adjoining room for examination, they turned pale to a man; and after a time they reappeared with flushed faces. Before long the clerk of the board came out and informed each of the decision in his case. If the applicant had been successful, he was sent to the surgeon for medical examination; if he had been rejected, we saw him no more.

Those who passed were divided into three classes, according to the merit which they appeared to show, and from those who had

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passed in the first class the first selections were made. It was better to pass as first lieutenant in the first class, than as captain in the third.

Every man was eagerly questioned, when he returned from the examining-room, by the waiting applicants. One young soldier, who, it seemed to me, would certainly obtain at least a captaincy, was rejected.

"What was the matter?" I asked him.

"I could n't explain about muster-rolls and company papers," he said.

This statement struck terror to my heart. The tactics, from the "school of the soldier" to brigade evolutions, I had at my tongue's end; but of muster-rolls, reports of ordnance, camp and garrison equipage, final statements, and company accounts, I knew next to nothing. I felt that I was already practically rejected, and pictured to myself the shame of returning home defeated.

But my name had not yet been called; there might be time to prepare myself.

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I rushed out of the room, and found a bookstore where military books were sold. Rum-maging there for something which bore upon the subject which I wished to study, I presently found a little volume which was entitled, "The Company Clerk; What to Do, and How to Do It." I bought the book, and hastened back to my room at the hotel.

It was four o'clock in the morning before I laid down the "Company Clerk"; but by that time I had mastered most of the contents, and committed to memory its blank forms. The next day, in a corner of the examining-office, I still studied and waited.

On the afternoon of the third day my name was called. Entering the examining-room, I saw General Silas Casey, the president of the board, seated at the end of a long table, on each side of which were two colonels and two captains. All eyed me sharply as I entered; and General Casey gruffly asked my name, age, birthplace, what was the uniform I wore, and

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who was the military instructor at the Highland Academy.

To the last question I replied, "Captain



James Wheeler, formerly of the Fourth Infantry;" and here I scored a point, for the Fourth Infantry was General Casey's regiment.

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The general's brusque manner frightened me so that I trembled violently.

"Young man," he said, "if you should pass this examination and join your regiment, you would expect to go into battle, would you not?"

"Ye—yes—sir," I faltered.

"And do you think, sir, that you will be as badly frightened as you are now?"

"I hope not! I don't think that I can ever be scared any worse, sir," I answered.

"Proceed with the examination, colonel," said the general.

A tall, dark man with eagles on his shoulder-straps spoke kindly to me, telling me to be seated, and to take my time in answering his questions. Then the examination proceeded.

My confidence returned, and my answers came promptly to his questions. I ignored the other examiners, and fixed my gaze on this colonel's black eyes.

Whether I was right or wrong, he did not

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correct me. Questions in tactics, mathematics, history, geography, and military papers followed each other in bewildering rapidity. How I blessed that little "Company Clerk"!

I was asked to explain some points in the skirmish drill. Did I know the bugle-calls? I did. Could I sound them? No. Did I know what words went with the bugle-calls? Some of them; and so on, for an hour and a half. Then I was sent to the clerk. After I had waited ten minutes, he said, "Go in there!" pointing to an adjoining room. If I had been less excited, I should have known that I had passed, and was going to the surgeon for medical examination; but I was too badly flustered to realize the significance of this order.

Entering the room I found the surgeon, a gray-haired gentleman in spectacles, reading a newspaper.

He looked up. "Take off all your clothing," he said, and resumed his reading.

I obeyed, and stood waiting in a very un-

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comfortable way. When the doctor had finished reading his article, he gave me a searching physical examination. Then he said, "Put on your clothing and report to the clerk."

I went to that official, feverish with anxiety to learn my fate. He was exasperatingly slow. He wrote out my full name and post-office address. Then he said, "You have passed as first lieutenant, first class. Go home and get ready. In about two weeks you will get your appointment."

First lieutenant! Did I hear aright? Yes, there it was on the sheet, written in a bold, round hand. First lieutenant! I should have a bar on my shoulder-strap, and command the company in the absence of the captain.

The room swam around. I felt as if I were walking on air. An hour later, I was on the train bound for home. How slowly the train seemed to travel!

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CHAPTER II

JOINING THE REGIMENT

THE week which I spent at home after my return from Washington was a busy one. The new lieutenant's uniform was ordered; a sword, belt, sash, revolver, haversack, and canteen were purchased. My mother would have fitted me out with enough supplies to load a baggage-wagon, but my father's experience as a soldier reduced everything to the service basis.

"A towel, a piece of soap, and an extra pair of stockings are all you want to carry with you," my father insisted. "Your valise will go with the baggage-wagons, and the chances are that you won't see it once in two months."

When the uniform came home it was necessary of course to array the new lieutenant in

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all his military toggery, and have his photograph taken.

I paid some farewell visits, and had confided to me many messages to soldiers in the Army of the Potomac. People at home had an idea that all the soldiers in the Army of the Potomac were in the habit of hobnobbing together. I promised to deliver as many of these messages as possible.

During the third week my appointment came. With delight I read my name, and the official information that the President of the United States, reposing special trust and confidence in my patriotism, valor, fidelity, and ability, had appointed me a first lieutenant in the Thirtieth United States regiment of colored troops.

Accompanying the appointment were a formidable oath of allegiance, which must be sworn to before a notary public, and orders to report at once to the commanding officer of the regiment at Annapolis, Maryland.

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I thought that I might take two or three days to myself, but my father's soldierly advice was this: "Your orders are to report at once. Get ready, and leave to-night on the eight o'clock train."

It would be much easier, he explained, to join the regiment before it left for the field. General Grant had assumed command of the armies, and an active campaign would surely begin.

My father's further words of advice were few. "Don't drink too much water," he said; "be gentlemanly with your men, but never familiar. If a man answers you impertinently or refuses to obey, knock him down. You will be scared when you go under fire; every one is. But stay with the line, and you will get your head again after a little."

My parents accompanied me to the railroad station. I had objected to my mother going to see me off, fearing that she might cry and make a scene; but before the train arrived I was

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shaking with fear lest I would be the one who would make the scene, and present the spectacle of an army officer blubbering and crying.

The lump in my throat was almost choking me when I kissed my parents good-bye. My mother waved her hand bravely and threw a kiss as the train moved off—and then went home and cried all night.

Now I was on the way to the war. There was no mistake this time. Somehow, I did not feel so enthusiastic as I had expected to feel; but I thought the matter over many times during my journey to Annapolis, and deemed myself the most fortunate and happy boy in the world.

At Annapolis I found the post headquarters and reported. A young lieutenant glanced at my orders, turned to a clerk and said, "Send this officer to Washington; his regiment left here last week." The clerk made the order, and the lieutenant signed it, and gave it to me without a word.



"My mother waved her hand bravely."



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Arriving at Washington and reporting, another order was given me to go to Alexandria. No boat went until the next day, and I was obliged to wait. Reporting at Alexandria, I was told that the colored division was somewhere near Manassas Junction. The train had left; there would not be another until the next day.

I spent the remainder of the day in seeing the sights of Alexandria. I saw the Marshall House, where Elmer Ellsworth, the first victim of the Civil War, was killed, and the church which Washington attended. The town was full of soldiers. How swarthy and sunburnt they were!

These bronzed fighters looked at me with an air of amusement which caused me to flush to the ears, for I knew that my new uniform and equipments, and my decidedly green and juvenile air, were being criticised by the veterans.

Early the next morning, May fourth, the

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train left Alexandria. It was filled with officers and soldiers returning to their regiments. A captain of the provost guard was conductor, and inspected every man's papers, for all were under orders or returning from furloughs.

Manassas Junction was reached at noon. Everything here was bustle and activity. Officers rode about on horseback, giving orders to crowds of soldiers and to the drivers of army-wagons, which, drawn by six mules each, swarmed about the station.

I was at a loss to know what to do. Seeing a colored soldier in the crowd, I observed him closely, and was delighted to see the figures "30" on his cap.

"Where is the Thirtieth?" I asked.

"Right ober dat-a-way, leftenant," the black soldier answered, indicating the direction by a jerk of his chin.

I asked him if he would carry my valise, at the same time producing a bit of fractional currency—our only change at that period.

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**“’Deed an’ ’deed ob co’sse I will, leftenant.
No trouble fer to tote dat walise!”**



A walk of a mile brought us to the regiment. Here I was at last. Lines of shelter-tents marked the position of the companies.

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The regimental flags, covered with waterproof cases, and stuck in the ground before the "fly" of a wall-tent, indicated the colonel's headquarters.

An officer, no more than twenty-five years old, who wore a brown moustache, a slouched hat, army trousers tucked in his boots, and shoulder-straps with silver eagles, was seated on a hardtack box by a camp-fire.

I saluted and produced my orders. He read them carefully and looked me over. I distinctly saw an expression of disappointment come upon his face.

"This is your first service, I presume?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Well," he went on, after a pause, "you won't have to wait long for your initiation."

"I am glad of that," I answered. He introduced me to some other officers near, and directed the adjutant to assign me to Company "H." The order was made, and the adjutant

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went with me to the company, and introduced me to Captain Smith and Lieutenant Eggleston.

The captain spoke pleasantly, but I detected a look of disappointment similar to that which the colonel's face had worn. It was plain that they considered me too young and boyish. I felt hurt and crushed, but resolved that I would stay with them, and support them to the best of my ability, if I died in doing it.

The drums were beating for battalion drill, and the first sergeant was forming the company in front of their tents.

"Come down and I will introduce you to the company," said the captain.

As the captain approached, the sergeant saluted and reported: "All present or accounted for, sir."

The men stood in two ranks at "shouldered arms," or "carry arms," as it is now called. Bringing me to the front of the company, the captain gave the command, "Attention, com-

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pany! Men, this is Lieutenant Bowley. He has been assigned to this company. He will be obeyed and respected accordingly. Present harms! Shoulder harms! Lieutenant, take your post."

I raised my cap in answer to the salute, and took my place in the line of file-closers, passing by the left of the company.

How black the men were! I never imagined that men could be so black. No wonder that the Confederates called them "smoked Yankées." Perhaps the massing of the color produced this peculiarly intense effect.

On the faces of some I detected a sort of quizzical expression. Evidently the men were disappointed, too. This seemed to me a little too much.

The company started for the line where the regiment was forming, but we were not to have battalion drill that day. A mounted orderly brought an order. "Pack up and be ready to move in ten minutes," was the word.

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Back to the tents the men went, at a double quick. Down came the shelter-tents, and they were rolled up in a surprisingly short time. An army wagon was at the colonel's tent.

"Better put your valise in there," said Captain Smith. I did so; and it was ten months before I saw it again.

I retained my rubber blanket, and filled my haversack with hardtack.

Other regiments of the division came marching by, and our regiment formed and joined in with them. All went marching down the Warrenton turnpike. We were going to the front.

I had noticed and practiced the gait of the veteran regiments that I had seen, and I easily fell into that long, swinging stride, that "reaching for the last inch," as it was happily called.

None of the officers had their swords drawn, but carried them in the scabbard, or dragged them clattering along on the ground. Nearly

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every officer wore ordinary army shoes. I had on the light shoes of civilian life.

The men were smoking, chatting, and laughing. Officers from the adjoining companies came up and scraped acquaintance. All were eager for news.

I learned that the regiment was in the First Brigade, Fourth Division, Ninth Army Corps.

Late in the afternoon a short halt was made, and the men ate their supper of hardtack and salt pork. I shared with my brother officers a nice lunch which I had in my haversack; but to me the hardtack tasted sweet and good, and I relished it.

We waded across Broad Run and two other streams. The water was more than knee-deep; but no halt was made to take off shoes and stockings. After we had crossed the streams we marched straight on through the dust beyond. Ruefully I gazed at my new uniform trousers, first soaked in water, and now covered with dirt.

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Darkness came on, but still we pressed forward. And now stinging pains began to shoot upward from my feet. Every step increased the pain, until my suffering became intense. But still I kept on.

The chattering and joking of the men had ceased. Nothing was heard but the steady, shuffling sound of the marching column, and an occasional sharp command, "Close up!"

It was eleven o'clock at night when the regiment halted in a field near Warrenton. The arms were stacked, and the men lay down behind them. In ten minutes I was sound asleep, wrapped in my rubber blanket, lying by the side of Captain Smith.

It seemed as if I had hardly closed my eyes when I heard the bugle sounding. The sergeant-major was saying, "Have your men ready to march in half an hour!"

It was a little past three o'clock, and I was so sleepy! Then I realized what the words of the bugle meant, when at reveille it said:

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Oh, I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up,
I can't get 'em up in the morning!

A cup of coffee was soon made by the captain's servant, Ben, and by the time the day was breaking we were on the march again. What a day that was!

The first steps were agony to me, but I shut my teeth and kept going. The day was hot, and the road dusty. Only short halts were made.

Toward noon the dull booming of cannon was heard. The men at the front had found the enemy.

During the day I studied my men. Most of them were broad-shouldered, powerful fellows. They did not seem so black, nor so much alike, as they did at first. One man, Thomas Festus by name, the oldest in the company, showed signs of giving out, and I carried his musket for him. The looks of approval among the men amply repaid me.

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It was half-past ten o'clock when we halted
that night near Brandy Station. With throb-

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bing, blistered feet I lay down near the stacks of muskets, and was asleep at once.

At two o'clock in the morning I was roused again; the line was forming, and in five minutes we were on the march. At daybreak we crossed the Rappahannock River on a pontoon bridge. The artillery was booming loudly at the front, and the dropping sound of musketry could be heard.

Staff officers were hurrying up the column. Gaps between regiments were closed up by double-quicking.

The Rapidan River was crossed at Germania Ford on another pontoon bridge, at seven o'clock. The crackling of musketry was growing sharper all the time.

Along a narrow road, through a tangled forest, we hurried on. A short halt was made near a house where the ambulances were bringing in wounded. A flag with a Greek cross indicated that it was the Sixth Corps' hospital.

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I visited the house, which had been taken by the surgeons as an operating-room. Outside, under trees and tents, were hundreds of wounded. I saw a pit near the house, ten feet long, five feet wide, and four feet deep, where the amputated members of the wounded were being buried. Here was grim war, in earnest. I cannot describe the scenes of horror which came before my eyes.

"Fall in! Forward, march!" We were off again, still pushing for the front.

The musketry was rolling wildly now. Wounded men, painfully making their way to the hospital, lined the road.

Double-quick now! "Close up, boys; never mind the sore feet. Drop your knapsack if you can't carry it!"

Every man was in his place. Suddenly we turned off the road into the tangled brush. A shrill, ear-piercing yell was heard.

"Dat am de Johnnies, suah nuff," said a sergeant who had been an army teamster for

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nearly three years. "You yeres dat music," he added, addressing the men in the ranks. "How you likes it? It 's to hear dat, and not to be skeered by it, dat de guv'ment feeds you fer; dat 's what dey gib you dese bu'ful shiny guns fer; no skulkin' now! Doan' ye dar to flinch!"

When we turned off into the brush, I knew that we were going into line of battle, and my heart seemed to sink into my boots. Only by shutting my teeth tight could I prevent them from chattering. I must have paled, for I saw the men looking at me.

The "army ague" had attacked me. My father's words came to me, "Keep with the line!" and I would have died sooner than stop then.

When we halted I took out a piece of hard-tack and munched it. It might have been sweet or salt for all I knew; but somehow it restored my confidence. Overhead, I heard the droning sound of nearly spent bullets.

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CHAPTER III

IN THE WILDERNESS

THOUGH we were near enough to hear the yell of the Confederates, the colored troops were not to fight nobly, or otherwise, that morning.

We were soon hurried back to Germania Ford, over the road by which we had come. Here we were placed in position to support a battery of artillery which was guarding the pontoon bridge. I took the opportunity to bathe in the Rapidan River, for my blistered feet had made my stockings stiff with blood. It seemed to me that I was sore from head to foot.

Here I obtained a pair of Uncle Sam's army brogans, and marched on with these easy shoes upon my feet.

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Toward five o'clock in the afternoon the musketry increased on the left, and soon we were called up. Over the same road we marched once more, until we reached the Fredericksburg plank road, and then turned toward the left. A company of cavalry were crossing in front of us, and we waited for them. They were moving at a sharp trot.

Forward we went again; halted once more, started again and halted, in the most tiresome and provoking way. The soldier never understands why he is ordered this way and that.

Just before dark a terrible uproar broke out on the left. We were faced about and started in that direction.

Soon we met staff officers, whose horses were covered with foam and dust.

"Hurry up, boys! hurry up! The Sixth Corps are flanked!"

The ranks closed up, the step was quickened. Then we went on at double-quick.

Down the plank road from the right were

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coming ambulances, the drivers lashing their horses to a run, and the wounded occupants screaming in agony as the vehicles jolted and crashed over the terribly rough road. Intermingled with the ambulances were the reserve ammunition wagons of the Sixth Corps.

The evening drew on, but to the right the sky was bright with the flashings of musketry. Stragglers came in with stories of disaster.

A battery of artillery was going with us to take a position on some cross-road.

All around we heard screaming, shouting of orders, lashing of horses, and bugle-calls.

To the right those terrible crashings of musketry and the yells of the charging enemy were still kept up.

We were breathless, nearly exhausted, and ready to drop. Our brigade-commander rode down the line.

"Now, boys," he shouted, "for the honor of the black brigade! Show the Sixth Corps you are men! This is your chance!"

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Our double-quick increased to a run. Off went the knapsacks and blankets. We were almost at the scene of the fighting.

Then the fire slackened. "Halt!" came the command.

We were not needed. The enemy had already been repulsed. We retraced our steps toward the left again.

No credit was ever given for that noble effort of exhausted, footsore men; not even a mention of it in the official reports.

There was no rest for us. All night long we were on the move, passing through burning woods. In places the fire was so hot that the men had to run. We witnessed most dreadful scenes; more than two hundred of the Union wounded had perished miserably in these flames.

The morning found us sleepy, tired, dusty, and cross. Officers and privates were of the same color: all thickly coated with red dust.

Our route took us on the Orange plank

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road, past the Fifth Corps Hospital, with its army of wounded, close up to the front line, where we were massed in columns.

"We are going in this time, sure," said Captain Smith, who was an old soldier. The excitement had died away. How I ached and throbbed, and how sleepy I was! Soldiering was not all fun, even if one were an officer.

General Grant and his staff passed near us here. The general-in-chief wore the regulation army hat and a plain blouse, with three little stars on the shoulders. He presented anything but a military appearance. He was smoking a cigar, and seemed to be taking no interest whatever in the proceedings about him. It is needless to say that officers and men took enough interest in him to make up for his lack of attention.

It is said that he ordered that the colored division should guard the wagon-train. At any rate, we did not "go in," but moved to the left again toward Chancellorsville.

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In doing so we passed in the rear of the lines of the Fifth Corps, and the soldiers thronged to the road to see the colored division. Our men, aware that they were objects of criticism, closed up their ranks, brought their guns to the right shoulder, and presented a creditable military appearance.

The white soldiers were not disposed to let them pass without some "chaffing," to which the black men were quite equal. One colored soldier, with a clear, mellow voice, raised the song:

"Will you, will you,
Fight for de Union?"

Instantly the whole line took up the chorus:

"Ah-ha! ah-ha!
We 'll fight for Uncle Sam!"

A generous round of applause from the Fifth Corps boys rewarded the singers.

All day we manœuvred in the tangled for-

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est. Night found us in line of battle in the
slashed timber of the old Chancellorsville



battle-ground. That night I slept as one dead.
When we were called in the morning the

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road in the rear of our line was thronged with thousands of wounded men, who were painfully making their way toward Fredericksburg. Thousands there were literally, for the dead, wounded, and missing at the Battle of the Wilderness were more than fifteen thousand.

Ambulances and army-wagons were filled with the severely wounded. Many were shrieking, crazed with agony; others were calling for water.

Some were praying to die, and some begged to be shot, or to be given a bayonet. The army was moving by the left flank; it was occupied in the most active warfare, and this awful procession must reach Fredericksburg as best it could. Here I saw war in its true colors.

When the wounded had passed, we moved again to another position, a mile south of the old Chancellorsville House. Here we built breastworks. As we were likely to remain a

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few hours, and the men were raw and inexperienced, the colonel ordered a drill in the manual of arms.

"Lieutenant, you may drill the company," the captain said.

I soon found that in the "loadings," the most important part of the manual, the men were awkward and clumsy. Some of them could hardly load their pieces in five minutes.

Taking a musket from a sergeant, I illustrated every motion and explained every point. The cadets at our academy had always drilled with precision and celerity, and I did my best, making the men count aloud and keep the time. They were quick to imitate, and were not long in catching the trick.

For an hour I drilled them on this one lesson, and they improved wonderfully. They had just finished an exercise, and the rammers had all been returned with a snap, almost as one man, when an officer stepped beside me. It was the colonel.

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"Very well done; very well, indeed," he remarked and passed on. I was happy, and the men were delighted.

After the drill I saw them still practicing at loading, and heard them say, "Reckon de little lieutenant knows a heap mo' n he looks!"

The day had been drizzly, and when the night came on the rain fell in torrents. We crept under our rubber blankets, and were congratulating ourselves that we should have some sleep that night, even if it did rain, when the adjutant's voice was heard:

"Pack up! Lively now! Get your men out as quick as you can!"

We crawled out, roused the men, and were soon on the road in the darkness, splashing through the mud and water. And such mud! Soft, slippery, and sticky, letting the foot go down more than ankle-deep, then holding on with a suction that made the next step a labor. Woe to him who lost a shoe; he must grope and feel for it in the mud, and comrades who

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followed behind would tumble over him, and rail at him heartily. Nearly all night we trudged in the mire, not knowing in the least



where we were going, and not caring very much. A cavalry fight had taken place on our line of march, and we fell over dead horses frequently. It must have been three o'clock

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in the morning when we halted, closed up the regiment; and formed in line of battle. Soaked to the skin and tired out, I sat down on a little pine-bush, with my rubber blanket over my head, and went to sleep in the pouring rain.

When I awoke it was daylight, and I was so stiff and cramped that I thought I could never move again. The men were lying around, some of them half buried in the mud. All were splashed from head to foot with the red soil of Virginia.

A fire was soon made, some coffee prepared, and with hot fried pork and fried hardtack we felt greatly invigorated. The men rallied one another on their personal appearance, and appeared to take things as a matter of course. We learned, by and by, that an attempt of the enemy to capture some of our wagon-train had been the cause of our night's tramp.

An hour for breakfast, and back we went over the same road, to our former camp at Chancellorsville.

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Rations were running low, and the men were cautioned to save all they could, for the five days' supplies were likely to have to last seven days. Fresh beef was issued, and was soon sizzling in the frying-pan.

"Lieutenant!" the adjutant called me, "you are detailed for picket; report with your detail to the division officer of the day at division headquarters."

It seemed "tough", but it was "all in the three years," as the soldiers used to say, and it would not do to growl the first time.

"All right, adjutant! I 'll be there. Here, Ben, give me a cup of coffee," I said, "and I 'll be off."

Taking charge of the detail of about fifty men, I reported at division headquarters. Details were there from other regiments, making two hundred men or more. We went out on the Orange turnpike, and, under the direction of the division officer of the day, established a picket line through the woods.

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This was the part of the Chancellorsville battle-ground where the Eleventh Corps had been routed the year before. The dead of that fight had been but half buried; it is impossible to describe the scenes among which we found ourselves. It was impossible to avoid stepping upon dead men's bones.

My part of the line was half a mile or more in length. At our left was the turnpike. Our cavalry vedettes were out on the road in front of us; beyond them were the enemy.

The army had moved to the left, and the guns were now thundering at Spottsylvania. Our picket-line was the extreme right of the army. We were informed that the enemy's cavalry were scouting not far off, and would probably "feel for us" during the night.

A breastwork of brush was built across the road. Every man was instructed what to do if we were attacked.

The pickets were posted in groups of three or four men at intervals of about thirty rods,

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in sight of each other. One man watched behind a tree or other shelter, and the others slept. When the picket had been on watch two hours, he waked one of his comrades, to relieve him. There were no fires, no smoking, no talking; all was quiet.

I was nervous from the excitement of the past few days, and from a sense of responsibility. The woods were full of strange sounds. Owls were hooting, and whippoorwills singing their mournful songs. Great, vicious, wolfish dogs, that had subsisted for months on the dead, were prowling through the woods.

Four times that night I visited every picket post of my line, and as the bones of men snapped beneath my tread, or my foot struck a skull, it required all my nerve to keep from breaking down.

No attack was made that night. The next afternoon we were called in, and followed the division, which had moved to Salem Church, eight miles away.

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Thousands of fresh troops, coming by way of Fredericksburg, were on their way to the front.

The first death in the company occurred here. A stout young fellow, attacked by cramps, lay down, crying, "O Lordy, I 'se got misery in my heart; I 'se a-gwine ter die, I 'se a-gwine ter die." The surgeon did his best, but the next morning the man was dead.

We buried him in a shallow grave beside the road, with a piece of a hardtack-box for his head-board.

A prayer-meeting in another regiment attracted me that evening. Grouped under the great pine-trees, the scene lighted up by fires of pine-knots, the men, all wearing their accoutrements, gathered. Every black face was sober and reverent.

The leader "lined off" the words of the hymn, and all sang the line together. The voices rose sweet and mellow. Then came prayers and exhortations. The words were



"I visited every picket post"



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those of ignorant men, but there was in them a pathos which I have never heard equalled.

The cannon were roaring at Spottsylvania, and the dropping sound of musketry was heard all the time. One powerful black soldier prayed, "O Lord Jesus, you know we'se ready an' willin' to die for de flag, but O Lord! if we falls, comfort de lubbed ones at home."

Responsive "Amens" came from all the hearers; and I turned away with tears in my eyes, for I too was thinking of my home, and the black soldier had spoken my unuttered prayer.

I had now been a soldier for a week. My "initiation" was progressing rapidly.

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CHAPTER IV

FROM SPOTTSYLVANIA TO PETERSBURG

THE Fourth Division was in the pine woods at the left of Spottsylvania, when late one afternoon the cavalry carbines began to crack at a furious rate. The enemy had developed in force, and the Third Ohio Cavalry and the Third New Jersey Cavalry—the “Butterflies”, as the Jersey men were called on account of their fantastic uniforms—had every man engaged.

There was a call for the infantry, and our regiment went off on the “double-quick.” I was doing my first detail as officer of the guard. Gathering up my sentinels, I followed the regiment on the run.

When we overtook the rest, the left flank company was deploying as skirmishers. Major

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Leake, who was directing the movement, promptly ordered my guard detail to deploy



with the others, and they were soon strung out five or six paces apart.

“Now just imagine you are hunting for

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coons, and keep your eyes open. Skirmishers, forward! Guide left, march!" shouted the major.

"'Pears like 'twas de coons doin' de huntin' dis time. Yah! yah!" laughed a black soldier, as the line moved forward with alacrity.

We passed through the woods to an open field. Across the field, some three hundred yards away, were the Confederate cavalry skirmishers. A few bullets came whizzing our way.

Here was my chance. I would fire my first shot for the old flag and the Union. Taking a rifle, I aimed with great deliberation at a horseman who appeared to be an officer, and fired. The rifle was an old Enfield. It kicked spitefully, and gave me the impression that my shoulder had been almost dislocated. And the officer? He did not notice it at all, but rode down his line perfectly unconcerned.

The Confederates fell back, and our firing was stopped. We remained in line all night,

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and when daylight came, there was no enemy in our front.

On the march from Spottsylvania to Cold Harbor, to our division was assigned the task of guarding the great wagon-trains that supplied the Army of the Potomac. It was a most arduous and thankless duty. We were kept almost constantly marching and manœuvring to protect the wagons from the dashing Confederate cavalry, who were always hovering around the flanks and rear, ready to pounce upon an unprotected train.

As nearly as human endurance made it possible, we must march all day, and go on picket or build roads all night. If ever the weary men were reposing comfortably in a shady spot, the bugle, it seemed, would surely be heard calling:

“I know you are tired, and don’t want to go,
But put on your knapsack, and come along
slow!”

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"Fall in!" was the order then, and away we went, plodding through the dust.

"Dat ole bugle he nebber git weary," said the men.

Accompanying the army was a great herd of beef-cattle, known among the soldiers, after their fashion of bestowing an odd name upon everything, as the "Bull Corps." One night, near the North Anna, we halted to allow a wagon-train and the Bull Corps to pass. The four regiments of the First Brigade went into the pine woods to the left of the road, stacked their arms, and lay down to rest. The Second Brigade did the same on the opposite side of the road.

All went well until the Bull Corps had nearly passed, when a steer broke from the herd and ran through a line of stacked muskets, overturning some of them and discharging one. A few men lying near by woke in a panic, grasped their muskets, and fired.

Immediately a scattering fire broke out

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along the whole line, and in another instant the Second Brigade, believing itself attacked, returned the fire.

Our regiment was the one nearest the road, and consequently we were directly between the two fires, and also under the hoofs of the frightened cattle, which were now stampeding in all directions.

We were all lying flat, and yelling, "Stop that firing! Lie down, Thirtieth!" when, by the misty moonlight, I saw a huge steer plunging directly toward me. Preferring the chances of being shot to the certainty of being trampled upon, I rose and ran behind a big pine. Spat came a bullet, striking the tree not a foot over my head.

This roused my temper. Jumping in among a group of men where some of the firing was coming from, I laid about vigorously with the flat of my sword, at the same time yelling at them to cease firing. I soon quieted that group. Meanwhile other officers were taking

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equally severe measures, and order was soon restored.

A few men had received bullet-wounds in this foolish panic, but most of the casualties, it was found, came from the officers' swords.

"Dere 's heaps ob disjointed cavalry goin' to de front," said one black soldier to me, as we lay one day near the Pamunkey River.

"Disjointed cavalry" was the soldier's name for a cavalry regiment which was sent to the front as infantry, armed only with carbines. "Dismounted cavalry" were cavalrymen fighting on foot, but with one man out of four holding the horses not far away.

The "disjointed cavalry" to whom my man had referred were three full regiments, of at least twelve hundred men each, all armed with the new Henry sixteen-shooters, the first of that modern arm that we had seen.

A few nights afterward, during the first week in June, the army lay at Cold Harbor. The enemy charged the Union line, and ran

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squarely against this brigade of "disjointed cavalry." Then what a terrific crackling of musketry there was! The sky was lighted up, and the glare of the musketry made everything as bright as day.

So deadly was the fire of these new weapons that but few of the assaulting line ever got back to their own side again. Most of them lay flat on their faces until the firing ceased, and were then taken prisoners.

"Say, Yanks," they asked our men, "what kind of guns youuns got, that you kin load 'em Sunday and shoot all the week?"

Twelve hundred prisoners were captured in this encounter, and two days later the Thirtieth was detailed to take half of the prisoners to White House Landing, the Union base of supplies.

A hot, dusty march of fifteen miles brought us to this place. A Virginia mansion had given the place its name, but of this mansion only the chimney remained.

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All about was a great city of tents. Thousands of these covered the ground. Every department of the great army was represented. Thousands of wounded were there being cared for by the medical department, assisted by the Sanitary and Christian Commissions.

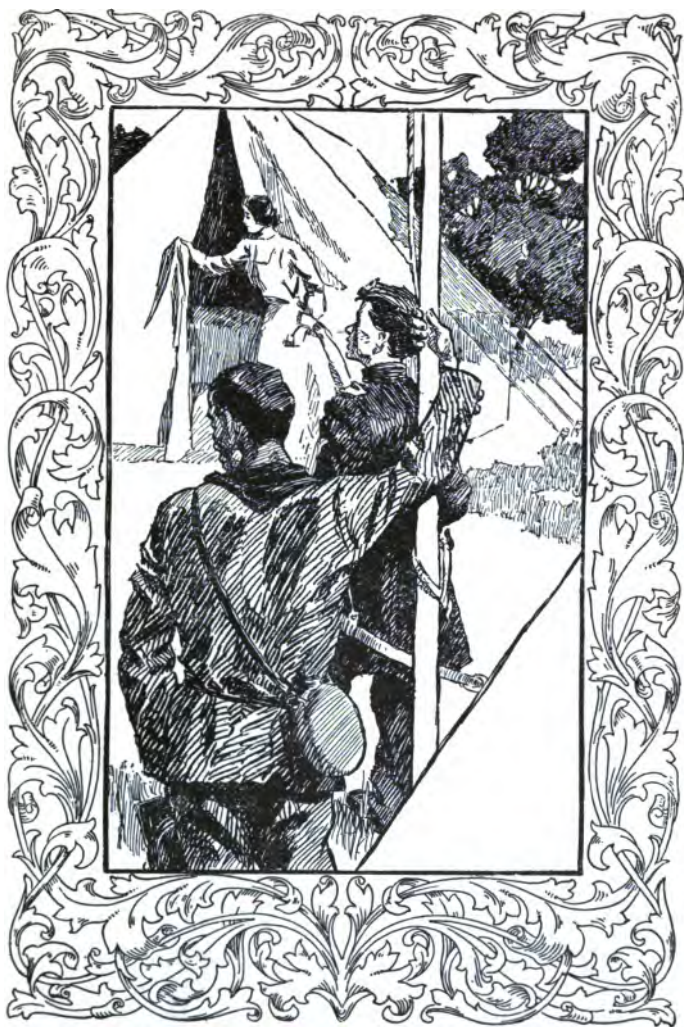
Lady nurses were attending the wounded. How sweet and homelike these ladies looked to us in their neat calico dresses! We almost envied the wounded under their tender care.

Our men were ragged, dirty, dusty, and tired, but they now considered themselves veterans; and how they straightened up when they saw the nurses!

We were the first troops directly from the front bringing the first large lot of prisoners, and every one turned out to see us.

Some sailors—"blue jackets"—and Ohio hundred-day volunteers were guarding the base of supplies.

Gunboats were slowly moving up and down



"Lady nurses attended the wounded "



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the river. We turned our prisoners over to the provost-marshal, and went into camp near a regiment of "hundred-day men."

This regiment was made up of clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and the very best class of Ohio citizens. All were thoroughly homesick. The army rations were too coarse for them, and most of them, it was said, were buying their supplies from the sutler's, at a cost of about five dollars a day to the man,—more money than any ten of our men possessed.

They had an abundance of rations of hard-tack, pork, coffee, sugar, and beans, and they freely offered our boys all that they wanted. The Thirtieth accepted the hospitality, and cooked and ate nearly all night.

The Ohioans had new, bright Springfield rifles, upon which our men cast envious glances; for their own Enfields were second-hand guns and not good ones at that. We left for the front very early the next morning; and it was subsequently found, I am sorry to say,

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that about half our regiment was armed with new Springfield rifles! Many of their new rubber blankets, too, were, I fear, never again seen by the hundred-day men at White House Landing.

We reached the front just in time to take part in a smart little cavalry fight, in which our regiment stood squarely across the road, without shelter, and checked a charging column of Confederate cavalry in a most handsome manner.

Our cavalry had been driven in, and many of the horses had empty saddles; but when the bugle sounded the rally, these riderless horses came up to line with the others, and with heads up and flashing eyes, aligned themselves as correctly as if each had carried a trooper.

Our little fight that day proved that the colored troops did possess fighting and "staying" qualities. What follows will show how the old superstitions still clung to them, and will illus-

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trate some of the difficulties that their white officers had to contend with.

There was a noisy wrangle down among the company tents that night. Joe Wright, a big, jet-black man, was saying angrily:

"Some o' dese yere yallar niggers, walkin' 'roun', tinks demse'ves men, 'kase dey got two-free stripes on dere arms."

"And some of these black chaps don't know as much as Thompson's colt!" retorted First Sergeant Scott—a bright, intelligent mulatto, who was the "yallar nigger" referred to.

"What 's the matter, Joe?" I asked.

"Sergeant say, sah, dere ain't no ghosts; but de culled ladies at de big plantation ober yander, dey says, sah, dat Ole Stonewall Jackson's ghos' do ride up an' down dese yere roads some nights, an' I b'lieves he do."

Argument was useless with one like Joe. The officers found out that the story of "Ole Stonewall's Ghos'" had, indeed, spread through the whole division.

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On the night of June twelfth we drew in our pickets, and moved off down the White House road as quietly as possible. We were the rear guard of the whole army, and the army was ten miles away; but of course we in the line did not know that. The brigade and division commanders were fully alive to our dangerous position, and kept the column moving at a lively rate.

The night was hot, and the roads were dusty. It was nearly two o'clock, and we had not halted. The men were beginning to lag and show signs of distress. Everybody was sleepy and cross.

The moon shone just enough to make everything appear weird and unreal. Suddenly a cry was raised: "Ghos'! Ghos'! Look out dar!"

Something was coming, with a terrible crashing sound. Every man around me vanished, the fugitives knocking me into the ditch as they left the road. Something white, leav-

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ing a trail of sparks behind it, went by with a terrible clatter. I pulled my pistol, but by the



time it was drawn there was nothing to shoot at.

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My first thought was that the Confederate cavalry had dashed through our line. I got out of the road and watched for the riders—but none came.

Officers of the black regiments were calling and yelling to their men, but none responded. Not a soldier was to be seen or heard. The whole Fourth Division, Ninth Corps, over four thousand five hundred men, seemed to have vanished entirely; and it was over an hour before they could be got together again.

The "Ghost" had scattered the division into thin air. And what was the ghost? It turned out to be a pack-mule belonging to division headquarters. The pack-saddle had turned under the mule, scaring him and causing him to run away. A lot of mess pans and kettles were attached to the saddle, and the animal's iron shoes, striking them, made the clatter and the sparks. Some pieces of shelter-tent attached to the pack, streaming and flapping, gave the appearance of white wings.

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When the cry of "Ghos'!" was raised, and this terrible apparition came into view, it was all that was needed to rout the whole division.

The men were much ashamed when they learned the cause of their fright. With a view to prevent like occurrences in the future, strict orders were issued to the officers to shoot down the first man who left the line under such circumstances.

Several incipient panics occurred some weeks later, but they were promptly checked by the officers, and by the resolute example of many of the men themselves.

A hard march brought us the next night to the banks of the James River.

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CHAPTER V

IN THE "CRATER," AND A PRISONER

WE arrived on the Petersburg line on the evening of June 17, 1864. The next morning we were placed in the second line of battle, where we were exposed to a furious fire of shell.

But it was found that the Union Army could not capture Petersburg by direct assault, and all troops not in the front line were set at work to dig the Confederates out.

We built forts for the artillery. We cut down thousands of small trees, and sharpened their branches for the abatis, or barricade, in front of the outer breastworks.

This work was done after dark. Each man carried a tree to the outer line, went over outside the breastworks, laid down his abatis, and

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drove stakes across it to hold it in place. The Confederate pickets were in rifle-pits not a hundred yards away, and they kept up a continuous fire, sending the bullets singing spitefully about the ears of the working party.

It was ticklish work, this planting of abatis under fire, and really required more nerve than to stand in line of battle. Our pickets would shoot at the flash of the Confederate rifles in the endeavor to keep them down and protect the working party. If the fire was particularly



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annoying, the artillery would open, sometimes a whole battery at once, sweeping the offending pits with canister. Then the enemy's artillery would reply, and all sought shelter who could seek it.

The firing extended over a mile, and made as much noise as a great battle.

Then for a time all became silent again, and every thing would be perfectly still. Presently the whippoorwills would come out and sing, as if protesting bravely against this strange disturbance of their customary solitudes.

On the night of June 20th our regiment went into the front line. The troops whom we relieved cautioned us not to raise our heads above the breastworks. Finding a hole that seemed secure, I went to sleep, to be awakened in the morning by a shell bursting almost directly over me. The bullets were buzzing all the time, spitting against the trees around.

Taking a cautious peep, I could see, two hundred yards away in the morning light, a

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red earth-bank about four feet high, with an abatis in front of it. This was the Confederates' main line of rifle-pits; their picket-pits were fifty yards nearer to us, in front of it.

The Union pickets were in scattered pits about the same distance in front of our line. This brought the pickets within one hundred yards of each other, and from this close range they were shooting continually.

Three days we lay here, digging and strengthening the trenches, losing men each day by bullet and shell. Then we were relieved at night, and sent to the rear to rest.

The "rest" was building forts and roads, making gabions,—wicker cylinders, filled with earth, for parapets,—and cutting down hundreds of acres of splendid trees to give range for the artillery. Then back we went to the rifle-pits in the front line.

Our cookery here was of the rudest character—a slice of salt pork toasted on a ramrod, or a piece of blue, tough fresh beef fried in

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half an old canteen, with hardtack and coffee, and nothing else. Much sickness resulted, and efforts were made to improve our fare. How the men were elated when the Commissary issued to them rations of soft bread, potatoes, and pickled onions!

One jubilant picket, holding up on a ramrod a fine loaf of bread, shouted to the vidette on the other side, "Say, Johnny, how do you like the looks of that?"

"Bully!" said the Confederate soldier; and, sending a well-directed bullet, he knocked the loaf and ramrod into the dirt.

"Say, Yank," he called out, "how do you like that?"

One hot day in July, Lieutenant Edgerton obtained permission to go to the rear to purchase "something good to eat." It was a risky matter to get back from the trenches, but Edgerton made the trip safely, and walked to a sutler's tent three miles away, where he made his purchases.

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From the Christian Commission's agent he obtained some cornstarch, and returned loaded down with condensed milk, white sugar, cheese, and self-raising flour. He promised



us "slapjacks with white sugar on them," and cornstarch pudding for supper.

In a square hole in the ground, which served as a kitchen, Lieutenant Edgerton prepared his pudding and slapjacks. How pleasant was

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the odor which came up from them, and how nice they looked!

"Whish, whish, whish—shell! Look out, boys!"

We scattered. A deafening report, a cloud of smoke, and a cry of agony from Edgerton.

"O lieutenant, are you wounded?" I called.

"Wounded! Worse than that! See there!"

Edgerton pointed to the "cook-hole," where lay our eagerly anticipated supper covered with dirt, and a total wreck.

"That 's a contemptible trick!" said Edgerton, almost crying.

I could have cried, too, if it would have helped matters. Our supper that night had but one course—hardtack.

This was the comedy of the situation. The awful tragedy was to come in the famous "Crater" of Petersburg.

Near us a regiment of Pennsylvania miners had been working for over a month, digging a tunnel under one of the Confederate forts

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known as Elliot's Salient. When they were under the fort, they branched their tunnel to the right and left, and in these branches eight cross chambers were cut. These were filled with powder, to be blown up when everything was ready. The explosion was to be followed by a grand assault, and it was expected that, as a result of the movement, Petersburg would be captured, and General Lee's army cut in two.

On the morning of July 30, 1864, at twenty minutes before five, the mine was exploded. It overwhelmed and destroyed nearly all the men of the Eighteenth and Twenty-third South Carolina regiments, and a battery of Confederate artillery.

All the Union artillery, nearly two hundred pieces, opened fire immediately after the explosion, and the cannonading was one of the most terrific of the war.

The first, second, and third divisions of the Ninth Corps charged soon after, but failed to advance as was expected. At eight o'clock

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the fourth division was ordered to assault, as a forlorn hope. Our regiment led the division. With fixed bayonets, we started across the open field under a heavy cross-fire for the enemy's line.

Down went our flag, the color-sergeant staining the stars and stripes with his blood. A grape-shot had torn his head in pieces.

A corporal quickly caught up the colors, but the color lance was shattered by a shot.

A shower of canister made a great gap in my company, but the men closed up and went on. We were led to the right of the "Crater," as the chasm was called which the explosion of the mine had caused, and the First Brigade assaulted the Confederate line, carrying the rifle-pits, and capturing two hundred prisoners and a color.

But more than half the Thirtieth had gone down.

In the desperate fighting that followed, our colonel, Delevan Bates, was shot through the

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face, and Major Leake was mortally wounded. Many of our best officers fell.

A terrific counter-charge was made by the Confederates, and we were routed. Most of the troops, white and black, rushed for the Union lines.

That I was appalled and terrified by the awful slaughter all around me was true enough; but I had retained my senses, and was keenly alive to everything that had taken place within reach of my eyes and ears. My father's words came to me, "Stay with the line!" and instead of breaking over the breast-works and running across the open field, I went down a traverse and stopped at the Crater, where some of our troops were rallying.

With me were a dozen men of the regiment. We were the last to reach the Crater, and the rifles of the Union soldiers were flashing in our faces when we jumped down into that fearful cavity. The Confederates were not twenty

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yards behind us, yelling and shooting as fast as they could. I felt the "burn" of a bullet on my face, but it did not break the skin.

Whoever has read the history of the Civil War knows that of all its battles none exceeded in horror this slaughter at the Crater. Of the six hundred or more men, representing every regiment of the Ninth Corps, who rallied there, but one hundred and thirty escaped unhurt; and all these were taken prisoners by the Confederates. All the colored men who rallied with me were killed.

My pistol was hot with firing; I loaded muskets, and searched the cartridge-boxes of the dead and wounded until I was ready to drop from exhaustion. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the Confederates made a final charge, scarcely heeding our feeble defence, and running over our thin line. A surrender was ordered, but some of our men did not hear the order, and kept up the resistance. They lost their lives—a useless sacrifice.



" ' Stay with the line ' "

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A Confederate sergeant demanded my sword and equipments, and started me back for the rear, a prisoner. I passed through a second Confederate line, composed of South Carolinians, and here lost my haversack and watch.

My father's objection, when I wished to apply for a commission, now came to me in full force: "If you are captured, that will be the last of you."

I went back to the rear, utterly disheartened and despondent, almost dead from thirst.

Half a mile back we found a stream of running water, and we drank and drank. The water revived me. Still farther back I found four officers of my regiment, one mortally wounded. Several captured officers of colored troops had denied their regiment, and had given as their own the name of a white regiment. Should I do the same?

I thought of the black men who had rallied with me in the Crater, and who had died to the last man. Then I told my comrades that I

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should face the music, and if I died, I should die without denying the brave fellows we had left behind in that trap of death.

One of my comrades, Lieutenant Sanders, said, "I 'm with you!" When our names and rank were taken down, we said, "Thirtieth United States Colored Infantry!" and saw the words "negro officer" written opposite our names in the list.

The next day we were marched through Petersburg. It was Sunday. At home, as I afterward learned, my father and mother, as they were returning from church, saw upon a newspaper bulletin-board, in big letters, the words, "Great Battle at Petersburg! Terrible Slaughter of the Colored Troops!"

The Monday morning papers of Worcester confirmed the story of the disaster, but gave no particulars. They waited impatiently for the New York papers. The train was late. At last it came, and they obtained a paper. There was the regiment—"Thirtieth United States:

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Colonel D. Bates, mortally wounded; Major Robert Leake, mortally wounded;" and so on—a long list. Fifteen out of twenty-two officers were lost, the paper said. Of Company A, only eighteen men remained out of sixty-six. My name was among the number of those reported lost; but it was so hopelessly misspelled that even my own parents could not recognize it.

Then they waited for a letter. Eight days after the battle it came. It was from Captain Smith, and it said, "The last I saw of your son he was keeping up the men to the line. I think and hope that he is a prisoner. His body was not among the dead that were brought into our lines by flag of truce."

Then followed words of comfort, kindly expressed; but they were but little heeded by my anxious parents. For six weeks no tidings came to them, and hope had almost died out; but one day came the long-looked-for letter from me.

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It was only a scrawl written on a piece of dirty paper that had been used on a tobacco package. This is what it said:

“Petersburg, Va., July 31, 1864.

“Dear Father and Mother:—I was captured in the fight yesterday. I am well, and well treated. Don’t worry about me. All ’s for the best. We start for Georgia to-morrow.—

“Your Loving Son.”

We had, indeed, been started for Georgia, as we supposed; but our first destination was the military prison at Danville, Virginia.

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CHAPTER VI

HOME AGAIN

MY fear that, as an officer of a black regiment, it would fare worse with me than with other captives, was not proved to be well founded. Surely our lot was a severe one, and no doubt necessarily so. Times were hard in the Confederacy in those days, and the rations of cornmeal that we received were barely sufficient to keep us alive. For over five months I did not taste meat.

We were marched first to Danville, Virginia. Then we went to Richland jail and Camp Asylum, Columbia, South Carolina.

Before long, owing to our want of proper food, scurvy attacked us. Raw sweet potatoes were the only antidote obtainable, and to get

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these I traded off my cap, waistcoat, shoes, trousers, and the military buttons from my coat.

General Sherman made his famous march to the sea, and advanced northward through the Carolinas. To escape him, we were sent from Columbia to Charlotte, North Carolina, then to Raleigh, and then to Goldsborough.

During these journeys, whose hardships and adventures would take too long to tell, I escaped three times; but each time only to be recaptured and sent back.

Seven months I spent in this wandering sort of captivity. At last, at Goldsborough, came the news that we were paroled.

As soon as possible we were loaded into box-cars and started for Wilmington. On the morning of the first day of March, 1865, a cold and drizzly day, we arrived at the Confederate front, ten miles from Wilmington, where the exchange was to take place.

Anxiously we waited, still in our box-cars,

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for Colonel Hatch, the Confederate Commis-



sioner, to appear. At last he came. A special engine and one coach, bearing Colonel Hatch

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and staff, took the lead, and our train slowly followed.

In a few moments those of us who could see out of the cars caught a sight of a group of blue-coated cavalymen, who displayed conspicuously a large white flag of truce. The train stopped, and we were commanded to disembark. Out of the cars we poured, and passed through a line of Confederate officers, then through a line of Union officers, each of us being counted by four different officials.

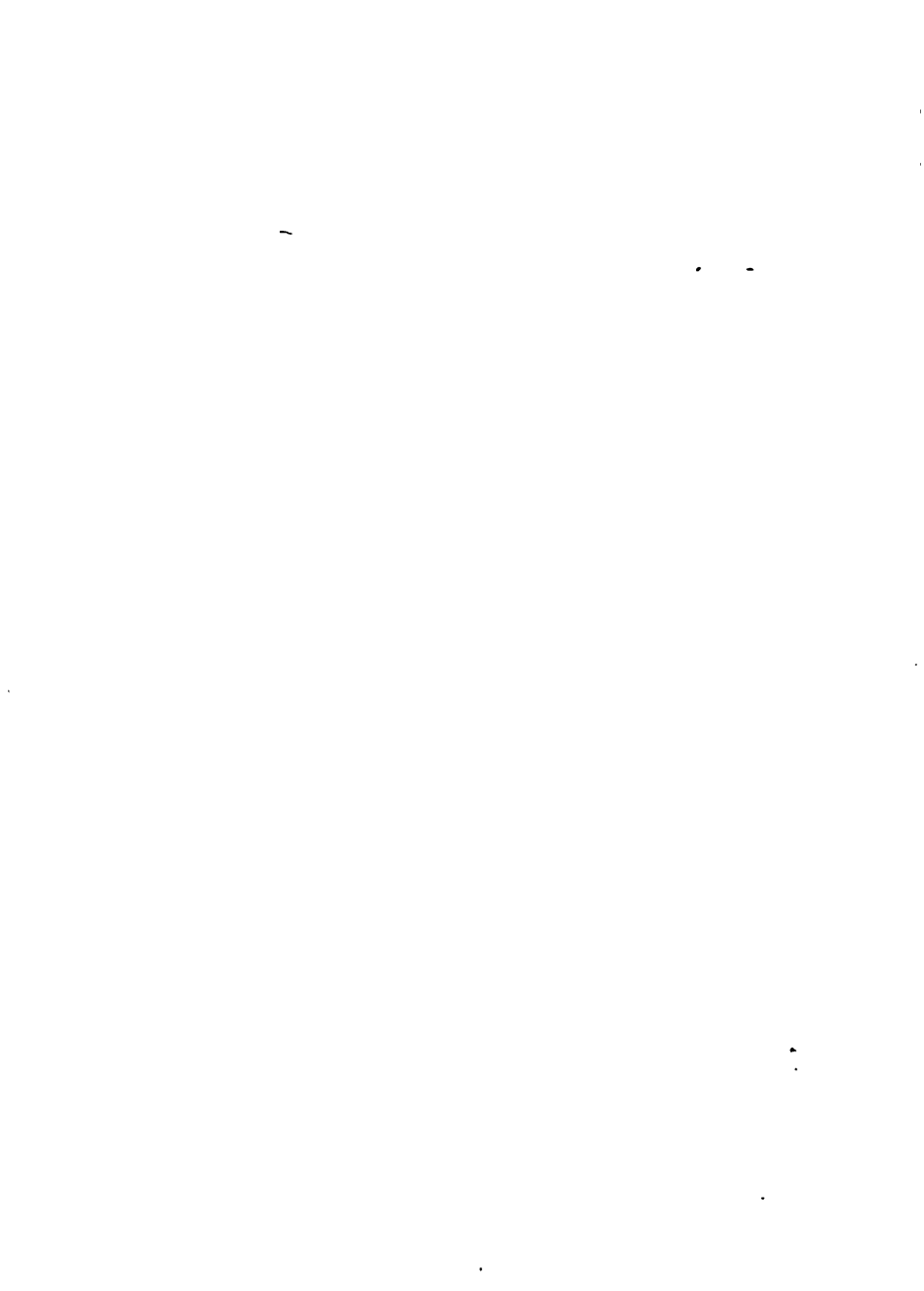
Soon we passed the file of cavalymen, who were standing at "present arms." Now we were free—or almost free. We started on a run down the road.

A quarter of a mile from the flag of truce we met the Union pickets. They were colored soldiers. Half a mile farther on the soldiers in advance began to cheer and throw their hats in the air.

Sanders, my mate, and I pressed forward eagerly. The sun shone out from the clouds,



"We met the Union pickets"



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and there, in a beautiful little valley, was the Union flag. How we cheered when we saw it!

The Second Division, Tenth Army Corps, were paraded to receive us. A beautiful arch of evergreens had been erected in our honor, and on it were the words, "Welcome Brothers."

The bands were playing national and Union airs, and when we reached the spot where the old flag swung in the breeze, every head was uncovered and every eye was filled with tears.

I had just passed the flag, the happy tears running down my dirty cheeks, when a strong pair of arms caught me up and hugged me hard. A bearded lip kissed me squarely on the mouth, and Captain Smith's voice was saying:

"God bless you, old fellow, you are the boy I'm looking for! Your mother will be glad to know of this."

It was my old captain with a major's straps on his shoulders.

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"You must come over to the regiment for dinner," he said, "and I 'll send you to Wilmington on a river steamer."

Of course I accepted his invitation. Then I felt another grip of the hand, and saw a black, smiling face.

"How yo' do, lieutenant? Mighty glad to see yo, sah!"

"Not more so than I am to see you, Dickson," said I. "And you are a sergeant now, eh?" I had glanced at the chevrons on his sleeves.

"Yes, sah, I 'se wearing de stripes. Mighty few ob de ole boys lef' in 'H' now. Mos' all new men."

"We 'll go through the company street as we go to headquarters," said the major.

Dickson ran on ahead, and as we neared the shelter-tents we head him shouting, "Turn out, 'H'! turn out! De little lieutenant hab come! Now, den, three cheers for de little lieutenant!"

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The cheers were given with a will. Such crowding around, such handshaking, such greetings!

"Why, Carter, I thought I saw you killed at Petersburg!" I said.

It was Evans, the wag of the company, who answered my wondering remark.

"Grape-shot hit Carter in de head, sah," he explained, gravely. "Spile de grape-shot!"

Carter grinned, lifted his cap, and showed a large white scar where the shot had grazed his left temple.

"Cotched a ball in dis leg at Hatcher's Run, sah, anudder in de shoulder at Fort Harrison, an' a flesher in de wris'," said Carter, showing a bandaged wrist, "at Sugar Loaf, Fort Fisher, 'toder day, but I don't reckon I 'se gwine to get killed in dis wah!"

In fact the man had been hit four times; but he came home all right with the regiment. In answer to anxious inquiries about comrades long missing, I could only tell of the fate of

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those who had died by my side in the Crater at Petersburg.

The major fairly pulled me away from the soldiers, and took me to headquarters. Here the officers came to greet us; and what a greeting it was! But many were missing. While I had been a prisoner, three officers had fallen while in command of my company.

Then dinner was served, and surely no meal was ever more relished. If the surgeon had not checked us who had been prisoners, we might have hurt ourselves with overeating.

Before we left on the boat for Wilmington, the men of Company "H" would have clothed me in new, clean clothes from their scanty stock; and pressed me to take all the money they had. I could only say, "Thank you, boys, but in three days I shall be up in old Bay State, and then I can get everything I need. You will need your clothes more than I shall."

God bless their brave and generous hearts, every one of them, wherever they are!

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We who were prisoners were still in the service of the government, but we had been released upon our solemn engagement not to take part in the war until we had been exchanged. We were given a furlough of thirty days, and were embarked upon a transport steamer which ran from Wilmington to Annapolis.

As we landed at Annapolis, a newspaper correspondent took our names and regiments.

At home in Worcester, the next morning, my father and mother were seated at the breakfast-table. For more than three months they had not heard a word from me, and their hearts were almost breaking with anxiety.

My father was looking over the morning paper, when he frightened mother by jumping up and almost upsetting the table. Then he gave the regular charging yell of the soldiers.

"Hurrah! mother, hurrah!" he shouted. "Our boy is alive! He reached Annapolis yesterday. O my God, I thank Thee!"

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Then the old soldier broke down, and sobbed like a child.

That forenoon a telegram assured my parents that I was well, and would be at home in a few days. Five days afterward I arrived at Worcester; and though it was three o'clock in the morning when I came, my parents heard and knew my footsteps on the sidewalk. When I reached the gate my father was at the door, and took me in his arms.

We sat and talked until seven o'clock. Then my mother remembered that breakfast was needed.

"I 'll stir up a johnny-cake," she said; "it will bake quickly, and you used to like it so much."

"Never mind, mother," said I; "I 've had corn-meal enough to last me the rest of my life!"

How quickly that furlough passed! I was received by my friends as one from the grave, for the report had spread that I was dead.

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At the expiration of my leave of absence I reported at Camp Parole, Annapolis. When



the great shadow, the death of Lincoln, over-
spread the land, it was my privilege to form

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one of the escort at the funeral of the President, and to stand directly opposite the funeral car as it stood in front of the White House.

How I remembered President Lincoln's hearty clasp of the hand the previous year, and his kindly greeting then!

I was soon declared exchanged, and rejoined the regiment at Goldsborough. Ours was not among the regiments which were early discharged. We did service through the following summer and autumn in various places along the coast of North Carolina.

But during the last week in December we were ordered to Baltimore for "muster out" and discharge. On the muster-out rolls of my company were the names of one hundred and sixty men. There were just sixty present, and more than half of these were recruits, who had been enlisted after the capture of Wilmington, and had never been in a battle. All the rest were dead, missing, or disabled.

When the time for parting came, every man

A BOY LIEUTENANT

came and shook hands with me, bidding me good-by, giving me his kind wishes, and receiving mine. Then Sergeant Scott formed the company for the last time.

“Present arms!”

The men presented to their officers. Then they faced to the right in four ranks, tossed their rifles to right shoulder shift, and, with the old swinging veteran step, marched out of Fort Federal Hill.

As they reached the crowded streets of Baltimore the ranks dissolved in the moving tide of civil life, never more to be reunited; and the glorious old Thirtieth was only a memory.

(The End.)

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